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MEMORANDUM

DATE: March 18, 1963

TO: The Vice President

FROM: Colonel Burris

RE: Highlights

SANITIZED

Authority Letter 11-2-77 + NSC 2-23-79  
By ing, NAC, Date 7-24-79

Cuba

South Vietnam

Diem remains in constant fear of his position and always suspects an imminent coup. He has just arrested 20 Army officers and proposes to arrest additional individuals to control his opposition.

Laos

The fragile truce becomes more uneasy and the country more unsettled. Various factions continue to quarrel, assassinations take place, and whole units of the neutralist forces have defected. Minor units have resumed warring among themselves.

USSR

Kohler sees East-West relations at a complete standstill. He feels that Soviet leadership is completely perplexed on how to deal with the Chinese Communists. In this dilemma the Soviets seem to be unable to overcome the weaknesses which were exposed by the Cuban fiasco. Additionally, a sluggish economy and mounting agricultural problems seem incapable of reasonable solution. Khrushchev has been unable to carry out his promises to consumers and to demonstrate the advantages of the Soviet system. Significantly the Soviet people recognize these deficiencies.

Germany

Germany-Soviet Union

The Soviet Ambassador to West Germany recently observed that the internationalization of the access routes to Berlin is a foregone conclusion. In conjunction with this remark, he noted that there were noticeable pressures from the Americans to reach a settlement on Berlin and the German question. In the same conversation, the Ambassador made the rather significant observation that since the U.S. gave up its missile bases in Turkey and Italy, previously regarded as essential, the presence of NATO forces in Central Europe is no longer so important to the Soviet Union. As the Ambassador pursued the idea of recognition of East Germany, the German official replied that his Government would never be able to accept such an idea, no matter how favorable the circumstances or what scheme or device were invoked. From this and other similar conversations, it appears that the pressures and techniques employed in the Berlin and German issues have for the most part been played, and the Soviets now feel that a general area of agreement is now recognized by both sides.

Germany

A major trade agreement has just been concluded with Poland, and State has congratulated Bonn on the political advantages of the agreement. Polish agreement will soon be followed by others with Hungary, Rumania and Bulgaria. German representation in Warsaw will establish contacts and associations which have thus far been excluded by German post-war policy.

Costa Rica

The stated U.S. objectives at the meeting now under way in San Jose include "expressing U.S. interest" in the people of the region; demonstrating support of regional economic integration; rededication to the Alliance for Progress; and establishing means to control travel between Cuba and Latin America.

Cuba